

# ACADEMIC POLICIES

## STUDENT GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Navarro College provides all student and administrative services on a non-discriminatory basis. These services are provided without regard to sex, sexual orientation, color, race, national origin, age, and handicap. With this in mind, a student grievance may encompass any dissatisfaction, complaint, or perceived injustice a person may have while associated with the college, as a current, **prospective, or past student**.

### INITIAL CONFLICT PROTOCOL

A student grievance may result from academic experiences, non-academic matters involving administrators, staff, or student organizations, or matters related to perceived discrimination based on sex, color, race, national origin, age, or handicap. Any student who believes he/she has been discriminated against by college personnel for any reason, including discrimination on the basis of sex, color, national origin, age, or handicap, has the right to expect due diligence and should contact the office of the Vice President of Student Services within ten business days of the initial concern to file a Student Discrimination Grievance. A student who works either part-time or full-time for the College and whose grievance is based on a concern involving his/her employment may contact the Human Resources Office; however, all complaints of student discrimination, harassment, assault or retaliation should be submitted in writing to the Vice President of Student Services. (See Board Policies, Sections DFD and FFE on Sexual Misconduct).

All complainants should attempt first to resolve the issues where they arise and with appropriate parties involved. Chain of command protocol should be followed beginning with the staff person with whom the issue lies; if the problem is not resolved, the appropriate supervisor should be contacted next and, if needed, followed with subsequent reporting levels of administration. The only exceptions to this rule would be in response to a concern over safety (e.g., harassment, sexual misconduct/Title IX complaint). All staff should follow the Staff Protocol in Response to Student Grievances (below) in providing guidance to students.

### LEGAL COUNSEL

Legal counsel may be present with adequate notice (24 hours usually is sufficient to allow college counsel to be present) and is to be allowed only for the purpose of advising the student. Thus, all attorneys must remain outside the hearing room. The student and the College representative each may request one 5-10 minute recess to consult with his/her attorney outside the hearing room. Legal counsel may not participate otherwise in a hearing at any level.

All *individual* student grievances should be resolved as follows:

#### INSTRUCTIONAL COMPLAINT

A student who has a grievance related to a final course grade must follow the "Grade Challenge Policy" found in the Student Handbook and the Academic Catalog. Similarly, a student whose concern pertains to a closed program of study should follow the "Program of Study Dismissal" procedure. A student who may have a concern with an instructor, his/her instructional decision, and/or another instructional program matter should follow the "Student/Instructor Conflict Resolution" policy. These academic policies may be found under the section entitled "Student Academic Grievance" within the current Academic Catalog.

#### NON-INSTRUCTIONAL COMPLAINT

A student with a grievance outside the classroom should pursue resolution through the course of action most appropriate to the department involved and as follows:

##### ADVISING / ADULT EDUCATION & LITERACY / LIBRARY / TUTORING

A student who has a grievance related to advising, Adult Education & Literacy, the library, or tutoring should first contact the director or dean for that department; if the problem is not resolved, the student may present the grievance to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

##### STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Students who have a grievance related to discipline must follow the Disciplinary Appeal Procedures found in the current Student Handbook.

##### TITLE IX / SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

An individual with knowledge of a complaint or allegation of sexual misconduct committed by staff, a student, or other individual should contact the Title IX Coordinator or designee (see Board Policies, Sections DFD and FFE on Sexual Misconduct).

##### BULLDOG LIFE / CULTURE OF CARING / DISABILITY SERVICES / STUDENT LIFE / COUNSELING / STUDENT CONDUCT / TESTING / INTERNATIONAL SERVICES / TRIO

Students who have a grievance related to other student services (e.g., Bulldog Life, Culture of Caring, disability services, activities, clubs, counseling, student conduct, testing, international program services, or TRIO) should first contact the director of that department; if the problem is not resolved, the student may present the grievance in written form to the Vice President of Student Services.

##### FINANCIAL AID/RESIDENCE LIFE/COMPUTER INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY/DINING SERVICES/BUSINESS OFFICE

A grievance related to Financial Aid, Residence Life, Computer Information Technology, Dining Services, or the Business Office will be brought to the attention of the director of that department; if the problem is not resolved, the student may present the grievance in writing to the Vice President of Finance and Administration. The exception to this would be *conduct-related* acceptance or re-acceptance into Residence Life programming, in which case the appeal should follow the protocol referenced in the Residence Life manual with the option for final appeal to be submitted in writing to the Vice President of Student Services.

##### ADMISSIONS/RECRUITING/MARKETING/INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

Grievances related to Admissions, Recruiting, Marketing, or Institutional Research will be brought to the attention of the director of that department; if the problem is not resolved, the student may present the grievance in writing to the Vice President of Enrollment Management and Institutional Effectiveness. The exception to this would be *conduct-related* admissions or re-admissions decisions (e.g., transcript notations regarding conduct) which should be directed to the

Vice President of Student Services and which may be reviewed by the Behavior Intervention Team; final appeal for a conduct-related decision may be sent in writing to the Vice President of Student Services.

**ATHLETICS**

A grievance related to athletics will be brought to the attention of the Head Coach. If the problem is not resolved, the student may present the grievance in writing to the Director of Athletics.

**BOOKSTORE / SCHOLARSHIPS / PHYSICAL PLANT/CAMPUS POLICE**

A grievance related to the bookstore, scholarships, the physical plant, campus police will be brought to the attention of the director of that department; if the problem is not resolved, the student may present the grievance in writing to the Vice President of Institutional Advancement and Operations.

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**FINAL APPEAL**

In each of these areas, the decision of the appropriate vice president or athletic director is considered final and binding. In all grievances except in the case of Student Discrimination, the role of the District President is not to decide the case or appeal thereof, but merely to determine whether the administrative chain of command has adhered to Navarro College procedures.

**TIMELINE FOR FILING A GRIEVANCE**

In resolving a student grievance, timely reporting of the complaint is important and thus required at all levels. Unless stated otherwise within procedural guidelines, the appropriate timeframe for filing a written grievance should be within ten business days from the date in which the student is first aware or notified of the issue of concern. Written appeals to the next/ subsequent level of the process must be made within two business days of the student's receipt of the institution's appellate decision. Any earlier, more expedient timelines detailed within the appropriate Navarro College procedure (e.g., Residence Life Appeals) supersede these general timeline guidelines provided to maintain a safe and civil college environment. Additionally, exceptions to these deadlines may be made only at the discretion of the District President or the appropriate vice president.

**THECB COMPLAINT**

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) Student Complaint Procedure (19 TAC SS 1.110-1.120) requires that a student filing a complaint must do so in a timely manner and must exhaust all grievance and appeal procedures of the institution as described in the Navarro College Student Grievance Procedure PRIOR to filing a complaint at the following address: [StudentComplaints@THECB.state.tx.us](mailto:StudentComplaints@THECB.state.tx.us). URL for the Texas Secretary of State: <http://www.sos.texas.gov/index.html>.

**SACSCOC REGIONAL ACCREDITATION**

Additionally, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) provides an option for grievances as part of its "Complaint Procedures against SACSCOC or its Accredited Institutions" and which can be utilized once the complainant has exhausted all grievance and appeal procedures of the institution as described in the Navarro College Student Grievance Procedure.

**PROGRAM-SPECIFIC ACCREDITATION ORGANIZATIONS**

In addition to general institutional accreditation under SACSCOC, individual departmental programs (including, but not limited to nursing, medical lab technology, occupational therapy assistant, physical therapy assistant, or cosmetology) may be associated with program-specific accreditation organizations with which a student may consult at any time. Contact information is provided for these program-specific accreditation organizations on the College's program-specific departmental website.

**STUDENT GRIEVANCE FORM**

Except in the case of safety (e.g., harassment/sexual misconduct/Title IX complaint), a student should first attempt to resolve the issue directly with the staff member of concern and if the student feels that this has not been successful, the student may contact the supervisor directly—either in person, by phone or email or by utilizing the Student Complaint/Grievance Form <https://www.navarrocollege.edu/support-services/grievance/index.html>.

**STUDENT FEEDBACK/SGA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Each semester the College solicits feedback on the College website to obtain concerns and suggestions regarding the improvement of college services. Students also may voice their ideas for improvement at regularly scheduled Student Government Association meetings on the Corsicana and Waxahachie campuses throughout the fall and spring semesters. However, for the individual student concerns or grievances, students should follow the grievance procedures detailed above. Additionally, with suggestions for improvement to specific programs, students may find it helpful to follow the same hierarchical chain as described above.

**STAFF PROTOCOL IN RESPONSE TO STUDENT GRIEVANCES**

When a staff member is approached by a student with a grievance, the staff member should employ appropriate protocol. The student should be referred to either the current Navarro College Student Handbook or the current Navarro College Academic Catalog, specifically in reference to the appropriate section.

Additionally, staff may assist the student by referencing the following protocol: 1) polite communication with the staff member of concern, and 2) if not resolved, subsequent communication with the supervisory chain of command in successive order, except in the case of safety (e.g., harassment, sexual misconduct/Title IX complaint). Students should be instructed to follow up on the resolution of such matters in a timely matter as defined in the Student Grievance Procedures and to consult the current Navarro College Student Handbook and/or the office of the Vice President of Student Services for further, more specific information.

**RECORDS RETENTION**

All administrators—directors, deans, and vice presidents--are expected to maintain thorough and appropriate records of student grievances in accordance with the State of Texas Records Retention Schedule, all federal requirements provided by the U.S. Department of Education, SACSCOC regional and program accreditation requirements, and applicable Navarro College policies and procedures.